

rode underneath, was not more than a yard above my head. She sat with nearly all her neck and breast outside the nest, which was only just large enough to contain the eggs; and I could well identify her as of this species. She did not fly off until after I had tied up my pony hard by, and had almost touched her with my stick. There were three eggs, laid side by side in a row, *along* which, strange to say, the bird had been sitting. The nest was some distance from the stem of the tree, and placed loosely on the bough; it was a mere platform of small sticks laid one across another with a few finer twigs and a little grass as a lining: so slightly was it put together, that, on attempting to take it from the tree, it fell to pieces.”—E. N.

23. BLACK-EARED CUCKOO. *Coccyzus seniculus*, Gosse, B. of Jam. p. 281 (excl. synonym.).

Mr. Selater informs us that this is identical with Mr. Gosse's specimens from Jamaica; but whether they are truly the same as Latham's *seniculus*, is at present questionable.

“I shot a female of this bird, March 23rd, 1858, at the place indicated as a locality for the species last mentioned. I am not certain that I ever saw it again. Whether this and the preceding are only summer visitors or not, I am unable to say: neither bird, prior to my visit, appeared to be known to the inhabitants.”—E. N.

24[?] —(?) WOODPECKER. *Picus* —(?). “Woodpecker.”

A bird answering to the description of a Woodpecker, and so called by our informants, seems to be found occasionally; but neither of us had the good fortune to meet with one; and the accounts were so very vague, as to preclude our giving any further indication of it than the present.

[To be continued.]

XIV.—*Account of a Visit to a Nesting-place of the Frigate-bird*
(*Fregata aquila*, L.). From a letter of GEORGE CAVENDISH
TAYLOR, Esq.

ON the 1st of January, 1858, we went off in a boat with four rowers to visit an island some four or five miles from Tigré

Island, in the bay of Fonseca, on the Pacific coast of Honduras. It is called Bird Island, and is not more than an acre in extent, and of an oblong shape. At one end the beach is sandy, and at low-water one can walk across to another island close adjoining. At the other end the shore is rocky, and it is much the same at the sides, the beach being strewn with large volcanic stones. The surface of the island is some 30 or 40 feet above the sea-level. It is covered with long grass, and there are also a few trees and low shrubs—mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*, Linn.)—growing in places, especially about high-water mark. At a distance the most conspicuous object was a numerous flight of Frigate-birds soaring over the island. As we approached, large white patches, caused by the droppings of the birds, became visible. We landed on the flat sandy beach, and in a few minutes I had shot a pair of Tiger-Bitterns (*Tigrisoma tigrinum*), which allowed me to approach without any difficulty. Besides these and the Frigate-birds, we saw no birds on the island, except a few Pelicans, some large *Accipitres*, and a single Booby (*Sula fusca*), which had its nest on a low tree, in company with the Frigate-birds. The whole island was appropriated by the latter. Nearly every tree and bush, both high and low, was covered with birds and their nests. The latter were mostly composed of a few sticks laid crossways, hardly as much in quantity as in the nest of the Ring-dove (*Columba palumbus*). Each nest contained a single egg, about the size of a hen's-egg, and of a chalky whiteness*. We brought away nearly a hundred of them. Some were quite fresh, and others had been sat upon some days. Although the nests were upon low bushes, still they were placed just too high for one to reach the eggs without climbing. Many of the nests were on the mangrove bushes which were growing just above high-water mark, so that we could see into them when standing on the bank of the island, which was at a higher level. Some of the birds were sitting on their nests, and others were perched upon the branches. By firing into the mass I might have killed a

* Specimens taken by Mr. Taylor, and exhibited at a meeting of the Zoological Society (June 8, 1858), measured $2\frac{3}{4}$ by $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. See P. Z. S. 1858, p. 318.

dozen at a shot ; but shooting would have been an absurdity, for I could have obtained any number with a stick. The difficulty was to get them off their nests. Shouting had little or no effect ; and even the report of a gun would only rouse a few, who would frequently settle again on the bushes. I threw some stones among them, without producing much result, and even tried to poke them off their seats with my gun ; but they merely snapped their beaks at me in retaliation. All this time there were thousands of other birds soaring in the air a little way over our heads.

I observed that the Frigate-birds were of three different plumages. As there were birds of all three sorts sitting together, and with their nests in the same bushes, I concluded that they were of one and the same species—males, females, and immature birds. Some have the head and neck white, the beak white, the feet and legs bluish white, the belly white, and the wing-coverts greyish brown. Others have the legs and feet black, and are black all over, with a greenish metallic tinge on the back. These have a bright scarlet pouch, which they inflate to the size of an ostrich's egg while on the wing. The boatmen informed me that these were the male birds. Others, probably immature birds, had the head black, the throat white, and the legs and feet pink. All had long, black, forked tails. I obtained a specimen of each, but did not preserve them, as I had much to do ; and, besides, they are stinking birds to handle, as bad as, or worse than, the Turkey-Buzzard (*Cathartes*). The Pelicans have also a breeding-place in Fonseca Bay, but it is in an island at some distance from the one in possession of the Frigate-birds.

Baltimore, U.S.A.,
Jan. 1st, 1859.

XV.—*List of Birds received from Ibadan, in Western Africa.*

By JOHN HENRY GURNEY, Esq., M.P.

THE Rev. David Hinderer and Mrs. Hinderer, of Ibadan, in Western Africa, have kindly forwarded to me a small collection of birds from that locality ; and I beg to send a list of them for